

## BOX OFFICE THRILLS OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

This Has Been a Poor Year From the Business End of the Game—Some Owners Who Have Become Money Princes

**B**ASEBALL from a business viewpoint is like the steel industry. It's either a feast or a famine. This has been a famine year.

Only four major league teams show a handsome profit. They are Cleveland and the Athletics of the American Association and Philadelphia and New York of the National League.

While this has been a lean year there is no particular need of extending condolences. The club owners know the hazards of the game. They have fat years and they have lean.

Take the case in Philadelphia. The

Cleveland and Athletics, American League; New York and Philadelphia, National League. Only Clubs Said to Have Made Big Profits

became press agent of the New York National League team. He is a clever, quick witted person. Some years ago the Chicago team came on the market through the money difficulties of John R. Walsh, the banker who was the power behind the ostensible owner.

While the other baseball men were thinking or talking about what would become of the club Murphy jumped aboard a train and got hold of Charles P. Taft, who owns a newspaper in Cincinnati, and who has had financial interests in at least two National League teams and one minor league team. Mr. Taft lent \$100,000 to him. For less than



Chas. W. Murphy  
OWNER OF THE CUBS.

Chas. W. Somers  
OWNER OF THE NAPS, HAS DONE MORE FOR THE GAME THAN ANY OTHER ONE PERSON IN THE UNITED STATES.

Mrs. Helene R. Britton.  
OWNER OF THE CARDINALS, AND THE ONLY WOMAN OWNER OF A BIG LEAGUE TEAM.

somewhat in excess of \$200,000. This year its profits are small.

The Boston National League team has been a joke until this year. It was bought a few years ago by John M. Ward, once one of the greatest pitchers and shortstops in baseball and of recent years a lawyer and golf player of repute. Ward didn't have enough money to finance the deal and got James Gaffney, politician, contractor and brother-in-law of Charles F. Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall, to go in with him. Ward couldn't lift the club out of its low estate and had to give up.

Gaffney took charge. He was fortunate enough to secure George Stallings as manager. Since Stallings took hold there has been a great change. While the Red Sox have been going down hill the Braves, as Gaffney's players are called, have been going up. Boston used to swear by the Red Sox. Now Boston is looking with pride at the Braves. If Gaffney's club has a deficit this year it will be a very small one.

St. Louis, too, gives an example of the sudden changes that come in the financial fortunes of a baseball club. The National League team of that city, known as the Cardinals, is owned by a woman, Mrs. Helene Robison Britton. She is the only woman who owns a big league club. Her father was Frank De Haas Robison, one of the street railway magnates of Cleveland.

He and his brother Stanley owned the Cleveland team, then of the Na-

tional League. They transferred their franchise to St. Louis fourteen or fifteen years ago and ran the club until they died. Then Mrs. Britton fell heir to it. She made a ten strike in engaging Roger Bresnahan as manager. The team wasn't of high class when he took hold, but he instilled a spirit into the players that astonished the country.

From a tailender he made the Cardinal outfit such a dashing aggregation that at one time it looked as if it might be a serious contender for the pennant. The whole country was rooting for the Cardinals, partly on Bresnahan's account, but more on account of the woman who had become identified with baseball. That year the St. Louis club had a profit of nearly \$100,000.

Bresnahan was so enthusiastic over the outlook that when some differences arose between him and Mrs. Britton he got backing sufficient to warrant his offering \$500,000 for the club. The offer was declined. The differences between manager and owner got worse and Bresnahan was let go. This year the club has not been making money. The St. Louis Browns, the American

League team of that city, was one of the greatest in baseball. It's far from that now. For several years it has been at or near the foot of the percentage table. Robert L. Hedger, who used to make carriages in Cincinnati, owns two-thirds of the stock in the company. When he bought control the club was put at a valuation of \$80,000. In one year, while the team was playing real baseball, the profits were \$168,000.

Ill health put Dreyfuss, owner of the Pittsburgh team, into baseball. He was employed in a distillery in Louisville when a young man and was ordered by his physician to get something to do that would keep him outdoors. He had played baseball and naturally thought of that.

For a time he had an interest in the Louisville club. Then he went to Pittsburgh. He has picked up for small money more great players than perhaps any other manager in America. He got Hans Wagner, Tommy Leach and Fred Clarke for next to nothing, and Miller, Carey and some others cost him little. At the same time he holds the record for paying the highest price ever given for a player, Marty O'Toole representing \$22,500 of his money.

About as well managed a baseball club as there is in America is the White Sox, the American League team of Chicago. It is owned by Charles Comiskey, a famous old ball player. The club cost Comiskey \$30,000. He could sell it today for \$1,000,000. The land on which

the club plays its home games cost \$102,000. The structure in which the spectators seat themselves to see the play cost Comiskey \$550,000. All the money he has spent on improvements has come out of the profits.

He has the good will of Chicago. He rarely has a lean year. His club always is a pretty good one. Now and then he captures the pennant. They call him the old Roman. He deserves all the success he has had.

Charles W. Murphy, who owns the Chicago National League team, popularly known as the Cubs, used to be a sporting writer in Cincinnati. Then he

the club plays its home games cost \$125,000. Murphy got control of the club. The very year that Murphy got the club it won the pennant and the next season it won the world's championship. That first year its profits were in excess of \$100,000 and the second year its profits were \$165,000. The average profits per year have been \$100,000 and the club is valued at \$1,000,000.

Probably no club in America has the good will of baseball men more than has that of Cleveland. It's all on account of Charles W. Somers. But for his courage and liberal lending of money to weak clubs the American League would have collapsed in its youth. He is credited with having put up \$785,000 to keep the league on its feet in the days of its trouble.

Comiskey has reason for all the kind things he says about Mr. Somers. If it hadn't been for \$50,000 that Somers gave to Comiskey in the height of the baseball war Comiskey wouldn't be a rich man to-day. The remarkable part of it is that Mr. Somers wasn't led into becoming the financial Moses of the American League through his love for baseball so much as through his confidence in Ben Johnson.

Surely a man who has done so much for baseball deserves the reward that a pennant would bring.

The Cleveland club has shown better this year than for a long time. The new manager, Joe Birmingham, seems to have got more out of the players than any of his predecessors. The Cleveland club never has made big money. In ten years its net earnings have been less than \$600,000. In no one year have they gone above the \$100,000 mark. This has been one of its best years.

The Cincinnati club is owned by August Hermann and the Fleischmann brothers, Julius and Max. Although no city in America has a more intense lot of baseball lovers than Cincinnati, the club ranks low as a money maker. Few teams have had more managers than has the one representing Cincinnati.

The stock of the Washington team is more widely distributed than that of any other baseball organization. Thomas Noyes, one of the owners of a Washington newspaper, controlled the club for some years. After his death some of his stock was sold. It is understood Benjamin S. Miner is the leading figure in the company to-day.

For ups and downs in baseball no town has anything on Detroit. Robert H. Yawkey, whose father is a big lumber man, bought the club about ten years ago for \$35,000 from S. F. Angus, who had lost \$60,000 in the first few years of the club's existence. Yawkey lost \$90,000 in two years. Then he got hold of Hugh Jennings as manager.

That year the Detroit won the pennant and Yawkey made \$50,000. The next year the club again won the pennant and made \$75,000. The next year the club again won the pennant and made \$160,000.

In 1910 and 1911 the club's profits were \$90,000. It hasn't been doing so well since then, but that club for which Mr. Yawkey paid \$35,000 is valued now at nearly twenty times that amount. Frank Navin, who had been a book-keeper for Angus, got a half interest in the Detroit through Mr. Yawkey's generosity.

The Brooklyn team is owned by Charles H. Ebbets and the McKeever brothers. The McKeever are newcomers, having been drawn into baseball through Mr. Ebbets' need for money in the building of the monster grand stand he recently put up.

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Walter Johnson, Considered by Many to Be the Greatest Pitcher of Them All.

National League team used to be owned by Charles P. Taft, Horace Fogel represented him. Somehow the team, although a good one, didn't make much money. Fogel got into trouble owing to some criticism he indulged in and was expelled by the league authorities. The club was bought by a syndicate of which Mr. Locke of Pittsburgh was the head and W. F. Baker was a member. Mr. Locke died in less than a year and then Mr. Baker, who formerly was Police Commissioner of New York, assumed charge of the club.

Baker knows little about baseball, but every game the Philadelphia club has played since he bought it has meant a net profit of \$1,000 to the owners. If it had not been that the Eastern clubs outlasted the Western teams this year and, therefore, minimized the interest in the struggle for the pennant, his profits would have been larger. With a fair run of luck next year this novice will be one of the money princes of baseball.

No man has made more money out of baseball than Ben Shibe, the owner of the Athletics. He has owned the club from the day it was formed, and his dividends have amounted to nearly a million dollars. The club is valued today at \$500,000.

Shibe is as enthusiastic a fan to-day as he was many years ago. He is intensely proud of the Athletics, and has good reason to be. It is one of the most remarkable baseball teams the country ever has had. For its success, most of the credit is due to Connie Mack, who used to be a great catcher and who now is a great manager. He owns a small slice of stock in the club and his profits this year would have been larger if his team had not made a runaway race of it and attained such a lead that interest in the fight was reduced.

The greatest money maker in baseball is the New York National League team. It is owned by the Brush estate, of which Harry Hempstead, who married John T. Brush's daughter, is the leading representative. Hempstead has a clothing store in Indianapolis. That's the town Mr. Brush came from. He used to have a clothing establishment there. Brush's baseball career reads like a romance.

He got into baseball to advertise his home town. He succeeded in getting a National League franchise for Indianapolis, but when the league was reduced from twelve to eight clubs he refused to surrender his franchise until the league people paid \$76,500 to him. A year or two later he bought the Cincinnati club for a song, ran it for ten years at a profit, and sold out for \$146,000 to a syndicate headed by August Hermann. Then he bought the New York club, which was in a bad way.

The New York team was owned by Andrew Freedman and Richard Croker was understood to be behind him. The price Brush paid was less than \$200,000. To-day it would take nearly ten times that amount to buy the club.

To see a different picture, look at the New York American League team. That is controlled by Frank Farrell, who used to be in the racing game. Big Bill Devery is supposed to be interested with him, together with some old school politicians. Farrell and his associates have spent between \$500,000 and \$750,000 on the club. They have had a profit only one year.

How kaleidoscopic are the money changes in baseball is exemplified in Boston. About ten years ago John I. Taylor, son of Gen. Charles H. Taylor

of the Boston Globe, got his father to buy the Red Sox, the American League team of that city. The price paid was not far from \$30,000. From the day he took hold the club has been a big money maker. One year its profits were approximately \$200,000.

Last year it won the world's championship; this year it has gone all to pieces. From being one of the most magnificent machines in organized baseball it has dropped out of serious calculation. Internal dissension has been its undoing. Last year its profits were

## CHINESE STUDENTS DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES AS ATHLETES



Start of the one-half mile race.

That Chinese students in this country take to athletics with success was shown at the track meet held in connection with the annual conference of Chinese

students of American universities and colleges which took place this year at Ithaca on August 21-26. Upward of

seventy-five men competed in the athletic games, the final events of which were held August 26. The Chinese from

Cornell University won the meet by a wide margin, those from Yale and Michigan being their closest competi-

tors. The men on the teams expect to take back with them to China the training principles and methods employed by American college men.